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The Kentucky Warbler

Volume X

October, 1934

No. 4

OUR TENTH VOLUME

With this issue THE KENTUCKY WARBLER ends its tenth volume. Started in January, 1925, it has tried to interest the members of the Kentucky Ornithological Society and other bird students in vital phases of conservation. We are celebrating the end of the tenth volume by enlarging the size of the leaflet and thus including much more material. This larger size will make it necessary for us to have more notes, more reports on studies by active ornithologists. It is the plan of the officers to start in the next issue a complete check-list of Kentucky birds, a few species in each number. This will be continued until the whole field has been covered. Save your copies of this leaflet, and they will become increasingly valuable.

OUR 1934 FALL MEETING

By Mabel Slack, Secretary-Treasurer

The tenth annual fall meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society was held at Wickliffe, Kentucky, on October 11-12 and at Walnut Log, Tennessee, on October 13-14. President Brasher C. Bacon was in charge of both sessions. On Thursday evening, October 11, a program was given at the Wickliffe High School. Superintendent O. A. Adams welcomed the members; President Bacon gave the response for the K. O. S. Mrs. Emma Guy Cromwell, director of state parks, spoke on the twelve state parks and the development that is being undertaken with funds from the national government. She dwelt especially on the natural beauties of Cumberland Falls State Park and the recent improvements there. Dr. Gordon Wilson, of Bowling Green, in his talk on **Water Birds of the Jackson Purchase**, said that 274 species of birds have been reported from the Jackson Purchase, while only 271 are listed for all the rest of the state. He called attention to the great wild-life areas at the mouth of the Ohio and below Hickman. Dr. T. Atchison Frazer, of Marion, **Rambling**, told interesting facts concerning conservation, bird banding, and bird migration. Miss Emilie Yunker, of Louisville, in **Our Sanctuary**, spoke of the numerous species she has recorded on her corner lot on Everett Avenue, Louis-

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ville, where she maintains several feeding devices. Mr. Burt Monroe, of Louisville, in **Pages from a Conservationist's Scrap-book**, pleaded for a consideration of wild life by sportsmen and read many newspaper clippings that showed a great ignorance of the value of birds. Mr. Brasher C. Bacon, of Madisonville, concluded the program by giving an account of the establishment of the Spring Lake Bird Sanctuary and of the numerous rare birds he has recorded there.

On Friday morning, October 12, Dr. Frazer addressed 108 school children at Blandville, Miss Yunker spoke to 108 at Kevil, Dr. Wilson kept 300 interested at Wickliffe, Mr. Monroe spoke to 275 at La Center, and Mr. Bacon addressed 250 at Bandana. After enjoying a trip through the Ancient Buried City at Wickliffe, the members left for Walnut Log, on Reelfoot Lake. There was time for only a brief walk near the hotel, while the hordes of Red-winged Blackbirds were coming to roost in the cattails. Around the big wood fire in Walnut Log Lodge the members sat after supper, comparing experiences in bird study.

The morning of October 13 brought from Nashville Dr. George R. Mayfield, the president of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, and Mr. A. F. Ganier, the foremost ornithologist of the South. Nearly all the members spent the morning on Reelfoot Lake, visiting several notable places. Much to the delight of the K. O. S. people, a Bald Eagle was the first bird recorded after we got out on the lake proper. At noon lunch Mr. Edward Ray, of Fordsville, spoke on **The Smallest Birds**, a discussion of the Hummingbirds, particularly our Ruby-throated Hummingbird.

In the late afternoon, after numerous pictures of the members were taken, every one went out to see the birds come to the lake roost. For an hour we watched in wonder the continuous procession. Estimates regarded as conservative were as follows: Red-winged Blackbird, 2,000,000; Bronzed Grackle, 1,000,000; Starling, 1,000,000; Cowbird, 200,000; and Robin, 5,000.

After supper Mr. Ganier discussed **Nesting Birds of Reelfoot Lake**. He made us realize for the first time that Reelfoot Lake is the only extensive area of its kind in the world. He told of the interesting "Cranetown" which he discovered and visited, probably the largest tree-nesting colony in the interior of the United States. In this region there were this year, in about ten acres, approximately 1,000 nests of the American Egret, the Double-crested Cormorant, the Great Blue (Ward's) Heron, the Water-Turkey, and the Yellow-crowned Night Heron.

At the business meeting Mr. Bacon read a telegram from Mr. Curtis Allen, publicity director of the Kentucky Game and Fish Commission, expressing regret that he could not attend the meeting. There was also a telegram from Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson, president of the National Association of Audubon Societies, sending greetings and saying that he expected to be in Kentucky in November. The members voted to classify memberships as follows: Sustaining, \$2.50 (including a membership in the Wilson Ornithological Club); Active, \$1.00; Group of school children (ten or more

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under sixteen years of age), 25c each person. **The Kentucky Warbler** was changed from a four-page to an eight-page quarterly. Mrs. Emma Guy Cromwell was voted honorary membership in the society. The other two honorary members, since the death of Miss Harriet Audubon, are A. F. Ganter and Mrs. Alicia B. Shaffer, of Cincinnati, a niece of Mrs. John James Audubon. Mr. Curtis Allen was voted field representative of the society, to advertise the activities of the society and to promote the interests of ornithology in his contact with the state in his work as publicity director of the Kentucky Game and Fish Commission. The three past presidents and three others were elected Councillors for the next year: Dr. L. Otley Pindar, Dr. Gordon Wilson, Dr. T. Atchison Frazer, Dr. Austin R. Middleton, Miss Emilie Yunker, and Mr. Fain King. The following officers were elected: President, Brasher C. Bacon, Madisonville; Vice-President, Edward M. Ray, Fordsville; Secretary-Treasurer, Mabel Slack, Louisville.

On Sunday morning, October 14, four boatloads of us were rowed northward up Bayou du Chien to a "Cranetown" that lies in the Kentucky edge of the lake. Stopping often to observe water and wading birds, we arrived at the very picturesque place, in the midst of a virgin forest of cypress. We counted thirty nests of the American Egret and the Great Blue (Ward's) Heron. We were disappointed at not seeing the great horde of birds that resort here in the spring. A leisurely trip down the bayou ended the day, one of the perfect ones of October.

Here is a complete list of the birds seen at Reelfoot Lake October 13 and 14: Bluebird, Red-winged Blackbird, Indigo Bunting, Carolina Chickadee, Cowbird, Crow, Brown Creeper, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Mourning Dove, Flicker, Goldfinch, Bronzed Grackle, Piedbilled Grebe, Red-shouldered Hawk, Marsh Hawk, Blue Jay, Junco, Killdeer Kingfisher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Meadowlark, Mockingbird, White-breasted Nuthatch, Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, Phoebe, Wood Pewee, Robin, Sandpiper, Wilson's Snipe, Migrant Shrike, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Starling, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Tree Swallow, Tufted Titmouse, Olive-backed Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Myrtle Warbler, Southern Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Winter Wren, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Baldpate, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Coot, Wood Duck, Bald Eagle, Duck Hawk, Black Duck, Ring-billed Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, Solitary.

The people who attended the Reelfoot Lake field trip were as follows: Miss Emilie Yunker, Mr. Burt Monroe, Miss Alice Thierman, Mr. Ernest Deats, and Miss Mabel Slack, Louisville; Mrs. Bird Wells Rice, Mrs. Wells, Mrs. Cobb, Cynthia; Miss Amy Longest, Mr. Jerry Longest Mercer, Mr. Charles Lacefield, Central City; Dr. Gordon Wilson, Dr. L. Y. Lancaster, Mr. William Owsley, Mr. William Youmans, Bowling Green; Mr. and Mrs. Edward Ray, Fordsville; Mr. Brasher C. Bacon, Madisonville; Dr. T. Atch-

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ison Frazer, Marion; Mrs. Kelley, Detroit, Michigan; Mr. Fain King, Wickliffe; Miss Grace Powers, Cairo, Illinois; Dr. George R. Mayfield, Mr. A. F. Ganier, Nashville, Tennessee. We regretted that Mrs. Emma Guy Cromwell was unable to attend, as she was detained on business at the Columbus Battlefield State Park.

A Word From Our President

The tenth annual fall meeting of the Kentucky Ornithological Society is now but a cherished memory. Our society has reason to congratulate itself upon the hearty cooperation from many sources both within and without its membership that has insured the most successful meeting since the organization of the society in 1923.

I desire to recognize with deep appreciation our indebtedness to Superintendent and Mrs. Otho Adams, Mr. Fain King, and other citizens of Wickliffe and to Mr. and Mrs. O. T. Wallaston, of Walnut Log Lodge at Reelfoot Lake, who assisted in every way to make our meeting successful and our stay pleasant. To Dr. George R. Mayfield, the president of the Tennessee Ornithological Society, and Mr. A. F. Ganier, our long-time friend, who led the trip to the heron rookery in Otter Basin; to the visiting speakers, who gave so gladly of their time and interesting experiences; and to Miss Mabel Slack, who worked unceasingly for the success of the program, we owe a deep debt of gratitude. Here's hoping that I may have the joy of seeing you again at the spring meeting in Louisville.

BRASHER C. BACON, President.

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SPLASHES FROM REELFOOT

By Burt Monroe

The bird hike on Saturday and the trip to "Cranetown" on Sunday, both led by Dr. Mayfield and Mr. Ganier, were the best ever. Mr. Ganier is one of the best ornithologists in the South, and he certainly knows where the interesting places are in his territory. If you didn't get to go, you have really missed something. However, you can see the pictures we took.

Dr. George R. Mayfield, head of the German Department of Vanderbilt University, is one of the best authorities on bird songs now living. His fellow ornithologists tell us that he knows nearly all the Warblers by their chirps alone, and we'll say that that is some achievement. Get in line for the doctor's services, especially during the fall migration.

One of the best and most complete lists of Reelfoot birds was turned in by our own Dr. Gordon Wilson. He went into every nook and cranny of the place. Ed Ray was willing to wager any amount that Dr. Wilson was lost when he ventured into Reelfoot's inaccessible places. However, the Bowling Green authority on wild life, as he is often called, probably with reference to birds, though, turned up on time and announced that he

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was never lost in his life and not even, like Daniel Boone, puzzled for a week or so.

The estimates given on the number of birds roosting in the cattails in Reelfoot on Saturday evening ranged from two million to twelve million. Heated arguments followed. It seemed as if bird men were all "het up" over a couple of birds. What's a few million either way? Mabel Slack, who was supposed to count them, merely says that there were lots of them coming in there.

Burt Monroe, the author of this paper, is preparing a new paper for the society called "Stumping Through Reelfoot." He did not miss hanging his boat on every stump in the lake and succeeded in getting on the same stump on two occasions.

Talk about the Arctic Tern and the Golden Plover making long flights if you want to, but we'd say that they have nothing on Mrs. Bird Wells Rice and her party, who came all the way from Cynthiana to attend the sessions at Wickliffe and Reelfoot. Orchids to them for their wonderful enthusiasm and for helping to make the fall meeting a success. We want more members of their kind.

Mr. Bill Owsley, of Bowling Green, says that as bridge players Professor Lancaster and Mr. Youmans are good teachers of biology. Please omit flowers.

Mr. Fain King, eminent archaeologist and owner of the Ancient Buried City, has been elected to our Board of Councillors and is going to make his twenty-five acre domain a bird refuge. He says that any one caught molesting birds on his premises will be laid to rest with the hundreds of others buried there.

The society owes a big vote of thanks to Professor O. A. Adams and his wife for their reception of us all at Wickliffe. And speaking of hospitality, we can't overlook Mr. and Mrs. O. T. Wallaston, owners of Walnut Log Lodge, at Reelfoot Lake. Such a place: splendid rooms, marvelous beds, excellent service, fried chicken, toothsome fish, hot biscuits. We'll be back some day.

The first bird seen on Reelfoot Lake was a Bald Eagle. Some eight members of the society verified this find. A Duck Hawk catching a duck was sighted by another group. Hundreds of ducks of different kinds swarmed in the lake among the stumps and were stirred to flight by the crawling row-boats. An "ornithologist's paradise" is naming the place in a mild manner.

Did you ever row a boat by pulling backwards while the boat goes forward? Some beginners took their boats into circles before mastering the technique. Just don't watch the action of the oars, and you're safe. But watch them, and you are on a stump (or two).

Three miles down the bayou along Reelfoot, rowed by a competent guide, accompanied by the best fellows and ladies on earth, birds everywhere, and nature doing her best to put on a real show for you—who

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dares mention the thought that nothing was missed by not attending the fall meeting of the K. O. S.?

The visit to Wickliffe was homecoming for Dr. Gordon Wilson. Twenty-one years ago he married in that town and, therefore, likes to come back. The town still remembers him and pays tribute to one whom they consider one of their most eminent sons, or sons-in-law.

And speaking of tributes, how many remember what Dr. T. Atchison Frazer said about Mr. Bacon on the last night at Reelfoot? Many of us will never forget it.

BURIED CITY AS BIRD SANCTUARY

The Kentucky Ornithological Society, cooperating with Mr. Fain W. King, owner of the Ancient Buried City, at Wickliffe, has established on the territory surrounding the buried city a bird refuge to be known as the A. B. C. King-Bird Refuge. Mr. Bacon, in commenting on the refuge, said, "Nesting boxes and feeding stations will be erected at intervals over the refuge, which will be planted in berry-bearing trees and shrubs that will provide food and shelter for the birds. This is a very desirable place to establish a refuge, since it is in a direct line of migration along the Mississippi River, traveled by hosts of birds in their journeys north and south.

"The establishment of refuges over Kentucky for the protection of the birds will be a leading objective of our society in the future. Now that the movement for the protection of song birds is well under way, the time seems ripe for a concerted effort to bring back the birds to those places from which they have been driven."

Mr. Bacon further says, "A child's memories should gleam with the beauties of flowers and skies and thrill with the remembered songs of birds. The one who cannot look back to a childhood in which birds sang and nested has been denied a birthright well worth fighting for. I desire to contribute my part to the restoration of the Kentucky of our ancestors and to have for the coming generations what I myself am privileged to enjoy more each day, the great out-of-doors and its creatures."—Condensed from the Madisonville Daily Messenger, October 23, 1934.

A MEMORABLE VISIT

On August 25, 1934, while I was spending my vacation on the Northern Peninsula of Michigan, I drove over from St. Ignace to near McMillan and spent the day on a bird hike with Oscar McKinley Bryens, who for many years has been one of our most faithful members. I had been in correspondence with Mr. Bryens since 1924 but had not previously seen him. He conducted me through some of his favorite woods and around two small lakes. He was pleased that this August 25 brought the largest record of species of that day of the month in any of the past ten years, 40. I

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was interested in his territory, so vastly different from mine, but most of all in him, for I regard him as the most accurate and persistent bird student I have ever seen. While I was at his farm, I also looked over his many records, saw some of his collections, and observed representative phases of his bird-banding work. Though many of the birds we recorded that day are like our Kentucky species, others are quite different. Here is a list of our 40 species: Red-winged Blackbird, Bobolink, Indigo Bunting, Black-capped Chickadee, Crow, Brown Creeper, Black Duck, Flicker, Goldfinch, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Cooper's Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Great Blue Heron, Slate-colored Junco, Killdeer, Kingbird, Kingfisher, Night-hawk, Ovenbird, Wood Pewee, Solitary Sandpiper, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, English Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Barn Swallow, Cliff Swallow, Chimney Swift, Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed Vireo, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, House Wren, Pied-billed Grebe, Canada Ruffed Grouse, European Starling, Evening Grosbeak.

GORDON WILSON.

SOME NOTES FROM LOUISVILLE

Egrets and Little Blue Herons.—From early July until September 1, American Egrets and Little Blue Herons were numerous at the Falls of the Ohio. Often there were over a hundred of the two species. Sometimes they would be scattered along the mud flats and sandbars for ten miles, but only a very few appeared above the falls. The dam has eliminated all sandbars and mud flats above the falls, and there is no suitable place for waders to feed. The ponds in the upper bottoms were not flooded last winter and consequently did not receive their usual supply of small fish; the rather dry summer made most of them perfectly dry, also. Below the falls the water was just the right depth for wading.

On September 1, when the Dove-shooting season opened, the Egrets and Little Blues became frightened away and seldom appeared, though they were sometimes sighted circling above their former feeding grounds. All the Little Blues except two were in the white plumage.

Flight of Broad-winged Hawks.—On September 23, 1934, we saw in northwestern Bullitt County some fifty Broad-winged Hawks, several of them at close range. After they circled above us for some time, they all straightened out their lines and went due south, not so much as flapping a wing during the whole time. We also observed that while they were climbing up to the proper altitude, their tails were spread out fanwise; when they started on their flight, their tails assumed their natural shape and width.

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Pipits and Horned Larks—On October 21 I saw a flock of some 50 Pipits, Prairie Horned Larks, and Northern Horned Larks on the edge of Bowman Field, the Louisville airport. I was able to distinguish the two kinds of Horned Larks because of the accurate markings listed in Peterson's new Field Guide to the Birds, an excellent new book that all of the K. O. S. people would like.

Wood Ibis—A Wood Ibis was observed three successive week-ends in August at the Falls and near there. The first time we were within a hundred yards of it for forty-five minutes and examined it in detail with field glasses and telescope. The bird waded slowly around a pond and was feeding, so far as we could see, chiefly on vegetable matter.

Shore Birds—On several occasions there were hundreds of water and wading birds at the Falls. Mr. Bacon, our President, made a trip out there and became very enthusiastic about the bewildering hordes. By seating ourselves and watching for several days we found the following species: Golden Plover, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe, Least Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Stilt, Solitary Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Dowitcher, Great Blue Heron, Little Blue Heron, Egret, Green Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Blue-winged Teal, Black Tern, Caspian Tern, and Wood Ibis. Many land birds, such as the Starling, the Chimney Swift, and the Barn, Bank, Rough-winged, and Cliff Swallows were also very numerous.

FLOYD S. CARPENTER.

THE KENTUCKY ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Organized April, 1923

President.....Mr. Brasher C. Bacon, Madisonville, Ky.
Vice-President.....Mr. Edward M. Ray, Fordsville, Ky.
Secretary-Treasurer—Miss Mabel Slack, 1004 Everett Ave., Louisville, Ky.

Meets annually in Louisville during the week of the Kentucky Education Association; in the fall at some town or park in the state.

Dues: Sustaining (including membership in the Wilson Ornithological Club) \$2.50; Active, \$1.00; Group (of ten or more children under sixteen years of age), 25c a person.

Address correspondence about the WARBLER to Dr. Gordon Wilson, Bowling Green. Send dues to the Secretary-Treasurer.